

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USBERLIN 0026

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOV, BQG
SUBJECT: FRG ANXIETIES ABOUT A SOVIET CALL FOR QA CONSULTATIONS

REF: 77 BONN 21415

SUMMARY. THE ALLIES IN BERLIN DO NOT CONSIDER THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PLANNING A SUDDEN PUSH FOR QA CONSULTATIONS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE WEST GERMANS, OUT OF SENSITIVITY TO SOVIET CRITICISM OF THEIR ACTIVITIES, MAY HAVE RE-CONSTRUCTED ALLIED CONVERSATIONS TO REACH THIS CONCLUSION. EAST GERMANS MAY HAVE BEEN EQUALLY MISLED BY MISINTERPRETING THE FREQUENT SOVIET DEMARCHES. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SUDDEN FRG PREOCCUPATION THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PREPARING TO LAUNCH A NEW PHASE OF BERLIN DIPLOMACY BY CALLING FOR QA NEGOTIATIONS IS CERTAINLY A CURIOUS DEVELOPMENT, ALTHOUGH WE CAN SEE HOW THEY COULD BE ALARMED BY THE DETAILED NATURE OF THE BND REPORT.
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NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE A HARD TIME CREDITING THE REPORT, AND THINK THAT IT MAY BE BASED ON MISUNDERSTANDINGS. THE BND STORY HAS TWO ELEMENTS:
(A) HIGH WESTERN DIPLOMATS IN BERLIN. THERE IS NO ALLIED CONCERN IN BERLIN KNOWN TO US THAT THE SOVIETS ARE NOW PARTICULARLY PREPARING A FORMAL CALL FOR QA CONSULTATIONS. THE LAST TOPICAL SPECULATION ABOUT THIS WAS IN 1976 IN CONNECTION WITH

ABRASIMOV'S SUGGESTIONS FOR A FIVE-YEAR QA CEREMONY. BERLIN OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF WHAT FOR SOME TIME HAS BEEN ACCEPTED WISDOM THAT THE SOVIETS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN QA CONSULTATIONS THAN THE ALLIES. THEY ARE ALSO AWARE THAT THE SOVIETS ACCUMULATE PROTESTS ON GIVEN SUBJECTS IN THE MANNER OF "BUILDING A CASE." GERMAN OFFICIALS MAY HAVE COMBINED THESE TWO ELEMENTS TO CONCOCT THEIR OWN INTERPRETATIONS OF ALLIED VIEWS. THE ALLIES ARE CHARY OF GIVING LOCAL POLITICIANS COMPLETE ACCOUNTS OF SOVIET COMPLAINTS, WHICH FURTHER CONTRIBUTES TO FUZZY PERCEPTIONS.

(B) HIGH SED FUNCTIONARY. WE HAVE NOTICED THAT THE SOVIETS GIVE GDR OFFICIALS ACCOUNTS OF THEIR DEMARCHES TO US ON FRG ACTIVITIES. MANY OF THESE ARE REPEATED BY GDR OFFICIAL MITDANK TO SENAT COUNSELOR KUNZE. THE PURPOSE THEREOF SEEMS TO BE A FORM OF CONTINUING REASSURANCE TO THE EAST GERMANS THAT THE SOVIETS WILL STOP FRG ENCROACHMENTS. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE EAST GERMANS LAY GREAT STORE BY THESE PROTESTS, AND THEY MAY OVERESTIMATE THEM AND TAKE THEM TOO LITERALLY.

2. THE GERMANS ARE IN AN UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION ON BERLIN TIES. THE LINKS ARE DOMESTICALLY BASED ON A CONSTITUTIONAL INTERPRETATION WHICH THE ALLIES REJECT AND THE RUSSIANS ABHOR. THE CHANCELLOR AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAVE LITTLE DIRECT CONTROL OVER SPONTANEOUS INDISCRETIONS PERPETRATED BY THE REST OF THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH FALL TO THE BURDEN OF FRG/SOVIET RELATIONS. THE ALLIES ARE OBLIGED TO DEFEND THESE FRG ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE MISGUIDED ONES. THIS PROBLEM OF CLEANING UP CRASH LANDINGS WITHOUT BEING CONFIDENTIAL

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IN ON THE TAKEOFF LEADS TO ALLIED RESENTMENTS, WHICH THE FRENCH TEND TO PUBLICIZE MORE THAN THE OTHERS. THIS DOUBTLESS CONTRIBUTES TO GERMAN SUSPICIONS THAT THE ALLIES WISH TO CUT BACK FRG ACTIVITIES, WHICH IS NOT REALLY THE CASE. WE CONTINUE TO WISH FOR BETTER AND MORE TIMELY CONSULTATIONS ON BERLIN MATTERS, BUT SIGNIFICANT CHANGE FOR THE BETTER WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE, NOTHING ABNORMAL FOR ALLIED CONSULTATIONS.

3. ANOTHER SUBJECT VERY MUCH ON GERMAN MINDS THESE DAYS IS THE BROADER UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE STATE OF FRG/SOVIET RELATIONS, INCLUDING BREZHNEV'S VISIT INTENTIONS. THIS CURRENTLY TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP BREEDS SPECULATION. THESE ELEMENTS ALL BUILD UP A CERTAIN ANXIETY, SOME OF WHICH BECAME VISIBLE AT THE NATO MINISTERIAL TALKS, AND WHICH CAN EASILY SLIDE INTO SPECIFIC SUSPICIONS.

4. WE ATTRIBUTE NO SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO, AND INDEED WE DISCOUNT, THE OCCASIONAL ASPERITIES OF ABRASIMOV AND TYUTYUNOV. BOTH OF THEM (AND TYUTYUNOV MAY BE COPYING THE AMBASSADOR) SEEM DELIBERATELY TO USE FEIGNED INDIGNATION AS AN ARGUMENTATIVE DEVICE. THERE IS A CERTAIN ARTIFICIALITY TO THIS, WHICH PARTICULARLY EMERGES WHEN THEIR PRESENTATIONS ARE CONTRASTED TO THE SOBRIETY OF A BRIEF

FROM KHOTULEV.

5. WE WOULD PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING CAPSULE ASSESSMENT OF THE SOVIET PSOTURE IN BERLIN IN RECENT MONTHS. THE SOVIETS HAVE INTENSIFIED SOMEWHAT THE NUMBER AND TONE OF THEIR PROTESTS AFTER A SIX-MONTHS HIATUS DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR. THEY HAVE ALSO GONE PUBLIC WITH A GOOD MANY OF THESE. THEIR PROTESTS USUALLY REASSERT THE OLD SOVIET GOAL OF SEEKING A CO-DETERMINATION ROLE OVER FRG (AND EC) ACTIVITIES IN THE WSB. IN RECENT MONTHS THEY HAVE PROVED READY TO INTERFERE VISIBLY IF SOMEWHAT TENTATIVELY

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WITH EC AND FRG ACTIVITIES IN BERLIN (ATTEMPTED INTIMIDATION OF COLOMBO CAVALCADE AND OF CURATORIUM INDIVISIBLE GERMANY). THEIR PROTESTS OFTEN CONTAIN A WARNING TO THE EFFECT THAT AT SOME FUTURE TIME THE SOVIETS WILL BE FORCED BY "FRG VILATIONS OF THE QA" TO MOVE BEYOND WORDS TO CONCRETE ACTIONS. NEITHER OF THESE THEMES IS NEW, BUT THEY HAVE APPEARED IN RECENT WEEKS WITH SOMEWHAT GREATER FREQUENCY--AFTER THE MIDYEAR LULL IN WHICH FEW PROTESTS WERE RECEIVED. THE BERLIN PRESS HAS NOTED THIS HIGHER DEGREE OF STRIDENCY AND HAS COMMENTED ON IT, SOMETIMES IN MILDLY ALARMIST TONES. INCREASED GDR INTERVENTION AGAINST GERMAN ACCESS COULD BE

RELATED TO IRRITATION AT FRG ACTIVITIES IN BERLIN, BUT MORE
PROBABLY IT IS IN THE CONTEXT OF STOPPING EXFILTRATION.

6. IT REPRESENTS, NONETHELESS, A QUANTUM LEAP TO SUGGEST THAT THE
SOVIET UNION IS NOW PREPARING THE GROUNDWORK FOR ACTION, SUCH AS
A CALL FOR QA CONSULTATIONS. CONSULTATIONS IN EFFECT WOULD BE AN
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EFFORT TO PUT THE ALLIES UNDER PRESSURE IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH
NEW AND MORE UNFAVORABLE GOUND RULES. IT SEEMS TO US EVIDENT THAT
WEST BERLIN WOULD BE THE IMMEDIATE LOSER IN ANY QA CONSULTATIONS.
THE WEST COULD NOT ACCEPT SOVIET DEMANDS FOR INCREASED LIMITS ONF
FRG PRESENCE AND EC TIES, WHICH WE THINK WOULD BE THE MAIN SOVIET
AIM IN SUCH CONSULTATIONS. THE RESULT WOULD BE SOME KIND OF DEAD-
LOCK, BUT ANY NEW STANDOFF WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF INCREASING LOCAL
AND FRG DOUBTS ABOUT THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE CITY. HOWEVER,
IF THE MOOD IN THE FRG AND BERLIN WERE DAMPENED BY SUCH A
CONSULTATION, THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY COME OUT THE
WINNERS. FOR THEIR DECISION TO APPLY PRESSURE ON BERLIN, THEY
COULD BE EXPECTED TO PAY ELSEWHERE, IN TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE
FRG AND US, DETENTE ACTIVITIES, MBFR, NATO POSTURE, ETC. SO WE
DO NOT THINK THEY WILL LIGHTLY RESORT TO USE OF THE BERLIN
PRESSURE POINT NOR DO WE SEE ANY PARTICULAR INDICATION THAT THEY
WILL DO SO IN THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1978.

7. IF THEY NONETHELESS DO DECIDE FOR WHATEVER REASON TO INCREASE
PRESSURE ON BERLIN, STOBBE'S ASSUMPTION OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP
OF THE BUNDESRAT WOULD PROVIDE A 1978 OCCASION WITH AN EVEN
CLEARER FOCUS THAT PASSAGE OF THE FINAL TWO PIECES OF FRG
LEGISLATION PROVIDING FOR EC DIRECT ELECTIONS. BUT THIS OULD
BE ONLY A PRETEXT. THE ROTATING CHIRMANSHIP OF THE BUNDESRAT
IS AS OLD AS THE FRG AND IF STOBBE IS CAREFUL NOT TO PERFORM
STATE ACTS OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER WEST BERLIN IN HIS CHAIRMANSHIP
CAPACITY, HIS CHAIRMANSHIP WILL NOT BE IN CONFLICT WITH THE QA.
THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN BUILDING A CASE RIGHT ALONG, AND COULD
PRESENT US WHENEVER THEY LIKE WITH A DOSSIER LISTING HUNDREDS
OF ALLEGED FRG QA VIOLATIONS, WHETHER OR NOT THESE "VIOLATIONS"
REALLY VIOLATE THE TERMS OF THE QA. WHETHER
THEY CHOOSE TO DO SO WOULD NOT IN OUR VIEW DEPEND ON FRG ACTIONS
AS LONG AS THOSE ACTIONS CONTINUE TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY THE
"BUSINESS AS USUAL" ATMOSPHERE OF RECENT YEARS. IT WOULD
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DEPEND ON A SOVIET DECISION THAT A MAJOR TACTICAL CHANGE IN
ADDRESSING BERLIN AFFAIRS IS LIKELY TO BE IN THEIR INTEREST.
GEORGE

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